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## **CSD** *News Release*

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### **POST-HOLIDAY SALES AND RETURNS... YOU NEED TO BE AN INFORMED AND CAREFUL CONSUMER, CSD ADVISES**

News reports are predicting a flurry of business activity over the coming days and weeks as consumers attempt to return or exchange items (many of which were received as gifts), and stores mark down goods in an effort to clear their winter inventory and make space for the spring.

Against this background, the Miami-Dade County Consumer Services Department (CSD) reminds consumers to be informed purchasers of goods and services.

"Many promotions advertised as 'Post-Christmas Sales' will offer genuine bargains," says CSD Consumer Advocate, Leonard Elias, "but some shoppers will be lured into stores believing that they are getting a bargain when they are not."

"A post-Christmas sale must represent a real reduction from the pre-holiday price," says Elias. "Five to ten percent is a good benchmark," he adds.

CSD enforcement officers have been conducting 'mall sweeps' in which they have gathered information about sales and other promotions. Where there are complaints, this information will be used in determining which promotions are genuine sales.

Consumers who encounter situations which they think may be instances of deceptive or misleading advertising can have these investigated by calling our consumer hotline at (305) 375-3677,” says Mario Goderich, Director of CSD’s Consumer Protection Division.

On the question of returns, problems in this area are always best avoided if shoppers are aware of sellers’ return policies prior to making the purchase. Some stores offer shoppers the convenience of a ‘gift receipt,’ thus making it easier for recipients to return or exchange unwanted goods.

State law requires that stores post written notification of their return policies at the point of purchase. Where there is no return policy posted, a consumer with a receipt can demand a cash refund within seven days of the purchase, as long as the product hasn’t been damaged, is not perishable and wasn’t custom made.

One recourse open to consumers, especially where the product does not perform as advertised, is the manufacturers’ warranty.

For advice on how to handle your consumer complaint, call the CSD Consumer Hotline at (305) 375-3677.

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*The Miami Dade Consumer Services Department is an agency of Miami-Dade County government that protects consumers through complaint mediation, business regulation, and consumer education. The Department operates the Consumer Hotline (305) 375-3677, a central telephone number for consumer complaints and information.*